साल, इस दिन का आयोजन करेंगे।

श्रीमती वीणा वर्मा: धन्यवाद।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (कुमारी सरोज खापर्डे): थैंक यू। श्री राम नाथ कोविन्द।

Indefinite Hunger Strike By SC/ST Railway Employees in Delhi Seeking Justice and Implementation of Railway Board's Directions in respect of their Demands

श्री राम नाथ कोविन्द (उत्तर प्रदेश): उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदया, मैं संक्षेप में एक महत्वपूर्ण विषय की ओर आपका ध्यान आकर्षित करना चाहूंगा। यद्यपि जिस संबंध में मैं बात कहने जा रहा हूं वह रेल मंत्रालय से संबंधित है। यहां पर आल इंडिया एस०सी० एस०टी० रेलवे एम्प्लाइज़ एसोसिएशन के कुछ पदाधिकारी और सदस्य पिछले 23-11-98 से डी०आर०एम० नई दिल्ली कार्यालय पर अपनी कुछ मांगों को ले करके भूख हड़ताल पर बैठे हैं। महोदया, मैं आज ही अभी सायं चार बजे माननीय रेल मंत्री जी से मिला था और यह कहते हुए मुझे प्रसन्नता है कि उन्होंने जो टिप्पणी की थी और यह कहा कि रेल कर्मचारी यदि अपनी न्यायोचित मांगों के लिए हड़ताल पर बैठे हैं तो यह बात रेल प्रशासन के लिए अच्छी नहीं है। मैं उनसे पुन: विनती करता हूं और अपेक्षा भी करता हूं और उसी समय जिस समय मैं मिला उन्होंने तुरन्त उचित आदेश भी दिए कि डी०आर०एम० स्तर पर कुछ लोग उनसे मिलें, बात करें और इस हड़ताल को तुरंत समाप्त करवाने की व्यवस्था करें।

मैं पुन: रेल मंत्री जी का आभार व्यक्त करता हूं और विनती करता हूं कि इस कार्य में उचित कदम तुरन्त उठाएं। धन्यवाद।

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Re: Derailment of 8029 down Kurla-Howrah Express in Manmad-Jalgaon Section on Bhusaval Division of Central Railway on 3.12.1998.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS, AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): Madam, as already informed yesterday by Shri Nitish Kumar, Hon'ble Minister for Railways, I visited the site of accident near Jalgaon, along with Member Engineering and Member Electrical Railway Board. We also visited the civil hospital at Jalgaon.

As a result of the above accident, 9 persons (including 3 Railway staff) have lost their lives, 11 suffered grievous injuries and 23 passengers suffered simple injuries. Injured persons have been admitted in Civil Hospital, Jalgaon and utmost care is being taken to render the best possible medical treatment. However, few of the injured passengers on their own request sought discharge from the hospital.

Ex-gratia payments was announced as follows, Rs. 25,000/- for dead, Rs. 5,000/- for grievously injured and Rs. 500/- for simple injuries. Directions have also been given to railway officials to help injured passengers in filling up claims forms so that they could get the compensation from Railway Claims Tribunal expeditiously. In this accident the district administration *i.e.* police personnel and doctors of civil hospital, besides some voluntary organisations rendered prompt help to injured persons.

Traffic on the Down line has since been restored at 8.35 hrs. today. Commissioner Railway Safety (CRS), Central Circle, has already started the inquiry and has been asked to complete the same expeditiously. As already informed yesterday, *prima facie*, the cause of the accident appeared to be weld failure. However, on receipt of inquiry report from CRS, regarding the cause of the accident, prompt action would be taken against the persons responsible as well as remedial steps to prevent recurrence of such accidents.

On behalf of railways and myself, I express deep condolences to the bereaved families and also express sincere sympathies to the injured. I trust the House will join me in extending heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU (West Bengal): Madam, there is no point in seeking clarifications now. If the Minister agrees, it can be postponed to Monday. This is an issue of great concern. Time and again this is happening. Every time we have been discussing that safety should be given the first priority.

The railway tracks are becoming very bad. Unless track maintenance and track renewal receives the kind of priority in the Railway Ministry, I think there will be more such accidents. They should respond to this point. What is being done? This statement talks about weld failure. I happened to study engineering twenty or twenty-two years ago. I don't know whether it has anything to do with the climatic change. If that is so, I would like to know whether any care is being taken during this particular period when something happens because of the climatic change. I don't know what the quality of the steel is and all that. Actually, the government should come up with a comprehensive discussion on how they are trying to address the problem of railway safety and maintenance of tracks. What is more important is consolidation of whatever railway network that we have than expansion. Fool-proof arrangements for the safety of passengers should receive priority.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI (Tamilnadu): Madam, two days ago in Tamil Nadu a goods train derailed. The House was not informed whether there was any casualty or whether anybody was injured. When the hon. Minister gives his reply that should also be taken into account. We don't know what had happened. In Tamil Nadu between Avadi and Annanur a goods train derailed.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): The Minister has made a statement on derailment of a 8029 DN Kurla-Howrah Express in Manmad-Jalgaon section.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: Why have not they made a statement on this also? I have gone through the statement. It happened in my State. That is why I am asking about it. If there was any casualty or anybody was injured, they should let us know. If they say that nobody is injured, I am happy.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): After his reply you can very well meet him and ask him. He will reply to you.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): No injury to any person is reported in that particular accident. That is derailment of a good train. It often takes place.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: He says, "It often takes place". That is very important.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: Yes, that is the reality.

SHRI RAM NAIK: Madam, I would like to respond to the two points which have been raised. One point is, often cracks develop in rails. There is need for consolidation. In future we will follow this practice. An attempt would be made to consolidate whatever we have done. Track maintenance is being given top priority.

Secondly, the inquiry report of the Commissioner, Railway Safety will give all the details. But when we went there we came to know about two things which were stated categorically. Firstly, the rail are not over-aged. That means, they are within the age in which they are supposed to give service. That has been confirmed. That is number one.

Secondly, welding of tracks is done by different methods. Here both the raise get together and then they become one. There is no question of keeping any distance as such in these particular rails where the accident has taken place.

So far as other details are concerned, when the Commissioner, Railway Safety gives his report, we will be knowing those details.

उपसभाध्यक्ष (कुमारी सरोज खापर्डे): मंत्री जी, अगर यही स्टेटमेंट आपने थोड़ा पहले किया होता या मण्डे को किया होता तो मुझे विश्वास है कि काफी हमारे माननीय सदस्यों ने इसमें पार्टिसिपेट किया होता, क्लैरिफिकेशन पूछा होता।

श्री राम नाईक: मैडम, कारण उससे उत्पन्न था कि कल प्रिलिमिनरि स्टेटमैंट माननीय मंत्री जी ने किया था। मैं जलगांव गया था और हमको लगा कि सदन को तुरन्त विश्वास में लेना चाहिए। पूरी रात दौरा करके मैं आया, तीन बजे मैंने जानकारी दी और इसीलिए जरा देरी से स्टेटमैंट हो रही है।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (कुमारी सरोज खापर्डे): कोई बात नहीं।

श्री राम नाईक: सदन को तुरन्त जानकारी देना भी हमारा कर्त्तव्य है और इसी भूमिका में हम रहना चाहते हैं।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (KUMARI SAROJ KHAPARDE): Mr. Basu, are your satisfied with the reply given by the Minister?

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Madam, it is not a question of satisfaction. Somehow, the situation has to be rectified. That is the issue.

श्री नीतीश कुमार: मैडम, अभी खन्ना रेल दुर्घटना के सिलसिले में जो बयान था, उस पर क्लैरिफिक्रेशन के सिलसिले में मैंने उन बिन्दुओं पर विस्तार से अपनी बात रखी थी। उनके कन्सर्न को हम शेयर करते हैं कि सेफ्टी टेप मोस्ट प्रायरिटी होनी चाहिए और ट्रेक रिन्युवल आदि के बारे में जो कठिनाई हैं, जो स्थिति है, उसके बारे में बिल्कुल साफ तौर पर मैंने पारदर्शिता के साथ जानकारी दे दी है।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (KUMARI SAROJ KHAPARDE): Today's business is over. I adjourn the House till 11 a.m. on Monday, the 7th December, 1998.

The House then adjourned at twelve minutes past six of the clock till eleven of the clock on Monday, the 7th December, 1998.

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